PARIS IN DANGER™

PARIS IN DANGER is Avalon Hill's trademark name for its Microcomputer Game of Napoleon's 1814 campaign.

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PARIS IN DANGER

INTRODUCTION

PARIS IN DANGER simulates Napoleon's 1814 campaign in France (see the Historical Background section at the end of this instruction manual). After the disastrous campaigns of 1812 and 1813, which resulted in the loss of half a million French troops, Napoleon was placed on the defensive, shielding France against the invading Allied (Austrian, Prussian and Russian) armies.

The Campaign of 1814 was one of Napoleon's finest. He conducted it with subtlety and lightning speed against numerically superior, but heavily encumbered, opponents. He attacked isolated enemy units on advantageous terms, while covering forces on the river lines held off the hostile masses. This computer simulation is designed for two people to play. One player will take the part of Napoleon and the other will act as the Allied commander, Schwarzenberg. PARIS IN DANGER can also be used by a single person, playing both sides, to recreate and study the real campaign.

PARIS IN DANGER is unique in that it allows the players to play on both the strategic and tactical levels. On the Strategic level there is a large-scale map of France. The French and Allied commander maneuver corps-size units on this map, attempting to gain an advantage over their opponent and accumulate victory points. Whenever enemy corps make contact, the players will be given the option of going to the Tactical level to resolve the battle or let the computer resolve the conflict. On the Tactical level the individual corps are broken down into their respective divisions. The battle takes place between the enemy divisions. After the battle is resolved, the game will continue on the Strategic level.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The French player will receive one victory point for every 750 Allied men eliminated. The Allied player will receive one victory point for each French town captured and thirty points for capturing Paris. Towns are captured by moving a unit into or through the town. Note that the last side to have a unit in the town controls that town. The winner is the first player to get 60 victory points or the one who has the highest score at the end of the game, turn 25. Players could also agree beforehand on ending the game on a specific turn before turn 25.

PARIS IN DANGER requires a great deal of playing time. To end the Strategic game and save it to disk, press the OPTION key on the computer console.

STRATEGIC LEVEL PLAY

After the program has loaded, the computer will take a minute to set up the game arrays. When this is done, the Strategic level map will be displayed. The Strategic map consists of France and the western part of Germany. On the map you will see towns, rivers, mountains and other pertinent geographic features. French-controlled towns will be indicated by a blue dot and Allied-controlled towns by a red dot. It is only possible to cross rivers at towns or bridges. Also, it is not possible for units to enter mountain squares. Players may find it useful to consult the map enclosed. See pages 14 and 15 of this manual.

STRATEGIC MAP

Besides the geographic symbols, you will see several symbols representing the French and Allied corps. Following is a key that identifies the various unit symbols:

French corps

Austrian corps (Allied)

Prussian corps (Allied)

Russian corps (Allied)

At the bottom of the map is a text window displaying unit statistics and other data/messages. See the sample text display on page 5 .

STARTING THE GAME

After the first part of the program has loaded, the computer will display "PLEASE STAND BY" on the screen. Shortly thereafter, the computer will play a tune and ask if you want to start a "NEW GAME" or load a "SAVED GAME". Type **1** to play a new game and **2** to load a saved game.

When the Strategic map is displayed on the screen, you are ready to play the game. Each game will consist of a maximum of 25 turns. Of course, players could mutually agree beforehand to end the game on a specified turn before 25. When stopping play before turn 25, you will be given the opportunity to save the game to disk. If you wish to do this, press the OPTION key on the computer keyboard.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Each turn consists of one "week", composed of seven "Normal" days, one "March" day, and one "Force March" day. Not all units can use the Force March day. As a general rule the Austrians and Russians will never Force March. Marches and Force Marches will reduce a unit's morale, so such tactics should be used with caution. Each Strategic turn is conducted in the following set sequence:

1. French player inputs his weekly moves for each of his corps.
2. Allied player inputs his weekly moves for each of his corps.
3. Computer moves all corps, both French and Allied, one day at a time.
4. When all of the week's Normal daily movement has been accomplished, Forced Marches will be conducted. When ALL of the Weekly movement has been carried out the computer will check for a winner. If there is no winner yet, a new turn will begin.
5. If at any time during the Strategic movement enemy corps come into contact (two enemy units attempting to occupy the SAME square) all movement is stopped and the computer will ask the players if they want to resolve the battle on the Tactical level or have the computer resolve it. Once the conflict has been resolved, Strategic movement will continue.

STRATEGIC MOVEMENT

Both players will use the same joystick to scroll the map and to input orders. On the map you will see a crosshair (+). Move this crosshair with the joystick. When you have it positioned over a unit you wish to examine or give orders to, press the "fire" button on the joystick. The computer will display the unit's nationality, corps designation, number of troops in the corps, number of cannon, and its current morale. If it is one of your units, the computer will allow you to issue movement commands. Following is a sample of the text display:

```
FRENCH IX CORPS
TROOPS: 13000        20 CANNON        MORALE: 98
```

Troop Strength Display

```
7 8 1   NAPOLEON IX CORPS
6 0 2   OLD WEEKLY COMMAND: 00111120
5 4 3   NEW WEEKLY COMMAND:
```

Movement Display

After positioning the crosshair over the unit as described above, you will see a black square on the map. You can now order the unit to move by moving the black square (via the joystick handle) in the direction you want the unit to move; i.e. right, left, etc. By moving this black square you are giving orders to that unit. Move the square to where you want the unit to go. When you have reached the maximum move rate for that unit for the week, the crosshair will appear again. If you do not wish to move the unit on a certain day, press the "fire" button and the unit will not move on that day. When you start issuing commands, the computer will show you last week's command for that unit in the right hand side of the text window. Should you want to use those **same** commands this week, press the SELECT button on the Atari keyboard. If there is more than one unit stacked in the same square, the computer will cycle through all of the units in that square before returning you the crosshair. Use the same procedure for each of the units you wish to move. Keep in mind that a unit will use last week's commands if you do not change them. When you have issued orders to all of your units, press the SELECT key. Ensure that your opponent is not observing the commands you input.

CAPTURING TOWNS

Red dots on the map are Allied-controlled towns, blue dots represent French-controlled towns. Whenever a corps attempts to enter an enemy town, there is a 25% chance the town's garrison will prevent the corps from entering. This will cancel that day's move for the corps. When an Allied unit enters a hostile town, the town will become a friendly town and will add a victory point to the Allied score. However, if the French retake one of their own towns, a victory point is removed from the Allied score.

TACTICAL LEVEL PLAY

The Tactical level combat game will be invoked whenever two or more enemy units attempt to occupy the same area and the players elect to fight the battle themselves instead of having the computer calculate the outcome. It will take several minutes for the Tactical combat program to load and set up the battle. When the Tactical map is displayed and the computer displays "ALLIED (or FRENCH) MOVEMENT PHASE", the battle is ready to begin.

All corps involved in the combat will be broken down into their respective divisions. On the average, a corps consists of three or four infantry divisions and one cavalry division, but this will vary from corps to corps. (For more information on each corps' component parts, see the Unit Listing on the back cover of this manual.) Artillery pieces are divided among the divisions of the corps, and become an organic part of the divisions. Note that in the Tactical phase of combat the term "unit" and "division" represent the same size unit.

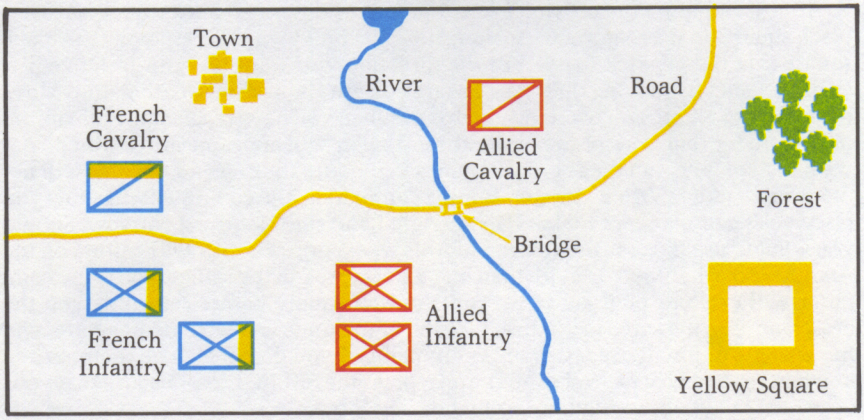
TACTICAL TURN SEQUENCE

The Tactical Turn is broken down into five separate steps:

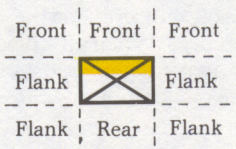
1. Allied or French movement
2. French or Allied movement
3. Allied or French artillery fire
4. French or Allied artillery fire
5. Melee

Which side moves first is determined randomly by the computer. The Tactical game will last for 48 turns or until the OPTION key is pushed by mutual consent of the players. Following is a graphic depiction of a tactical situation:

Tactical Map Display



The "Yellow Square" is used to give commands to your units. The blue units are French and the red units are Allied. On the edge of each unit is a yellow bar. This bar indicates which direction the unit is facing, as follows:



Unit Facing Diagram

FACING

The "facing" of a unit is very important, as a unit can only attack in the direction it is facing. A unit can defend on its flanks and rear sides as well as in the direction it is facing, but such defense is not as effective as a defense in the front facing.

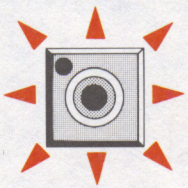
MOVEMENT

To move your units, use the joystick to position the yellow square over the unit you want to move and press the "fire" button. If the unit is one of your units, the computer will display the unit's I.D. number, number of men in the unit, the number of usable cannon available to it and its morale level.

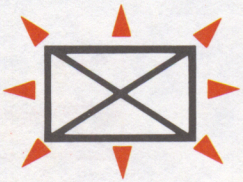
If the unit you want to move is a cavalry unit, the computer will instruct you to tap the joystick handle to the RIGHT to issue movement commands, or to the LEFT if you decide not to move the unit. Be careful, if you elect not to move the unit (pressing the joystick to the left) you will not be allowed to go back later that turn and move the unit.

When moving an infantry unit, the computer will first prompt you by asking if you want to change the unit's formation (see below). Changing a unit's formation will take the entire turn so you will not be able to do anything else to that unit for the remainder of the turn. Tap the joystick handle to the RIGHT to change the formation and to the LEFT not to change it.

All units are moved with the joystick. A unit can only move in the direction it is facing (the side with the solid yellow bar). If you attempt to move in any other direction, the unit will only change its facing to that direction. To move the unit, simply tap the joystick in the direction you wish the unit to move. Tap UP to move the unit to the north (up) one square, tap RIGHT to move it to the east, etc.



Joystick



Unit

Movement Directions

Moving a unit horizontally or vertically costs one movement point. However, moving a unit diagonally will cost two movement points. Following is a list of the movement points available to various units according to the formation the unit is in at the time of movement:

MOVEMENT POINT CHART

Unit/Formation	Movement Points Available
Infantry in Line	4
Infantry in Column	6
Infantry in Mixed Formation	4
Infantry in Square Formation	2
Cavalry	10

Forest and rivers are impassable.

When you have moved all of your units, press the yellow SELECT button on the keyboard.

ARTILLERY FIRE

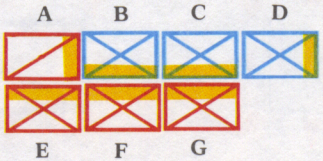
After both sides have moved, each side will be allowed to fire its artillery. Each unit or division has its own organic artillery. To fire your artillery, place the yellow square on the unit whose artillery you wish to fire and press the "fire" button on the joystick. Then put the yellow square on the target unit and press the "fire" button again. The computer will do the rest. The effective range for the artillery is seven squares. The maximum possible range at which you can expect to hit anything at all is 12 squares.

Casualties inflicted on the target unit depend on the number of cannon firing, the range, and the formation that the target unit is in. Units in the Square formation will tend to take more casualties than a unit in line formation.

MELEE

Melee will take place whenever two or more enemy units are in contact, and at least one of the units is facing an enemy unit. During Melee it is assumed that the infantry on both sides are engaged in musket and bayonet combat and that the unit's artillery is firing grape and canister at close range. Melee is totally under the computer's control. A unit will attack any and all enemy units to its front facing. That is, all enemy units directly in front of it and to its right- and left-front as well. Casualties are resolved by the computer on the basis of the number of men firing, the formation of the attacking and defending unit, whether the unit is firing directly ahead or diagonally, and whether the target unit is flanked (i.e. can he fire back?). If the target unit is not flanked it will return fire.

The following diagram should help you understand the importance of a unit's facing in Melee. The blue units represent French units and the red units Allied:



Example of Melee

1. Allied unit **A** can attack French unit **B** in the Flank.
2. Allied unit **E** can attack French unit **B** in the Front.
3. Allied unit **F** can attack French units **B** and **C** in the Front.
4. Allied unit **G** can attack French units **B** and **C** in the Front and French unit **D** in the Flank.
5. French unit **B** can attack Allied units **E**, **F** and **G** in the Front but it may not attack **A** at all.
6. French unit **C** can attack Allied units **F** and **G** in the Front.
7. French unit **D** cannot attack any Allied unit, as it does not have any Allied unit in its Front facing.

MORALE

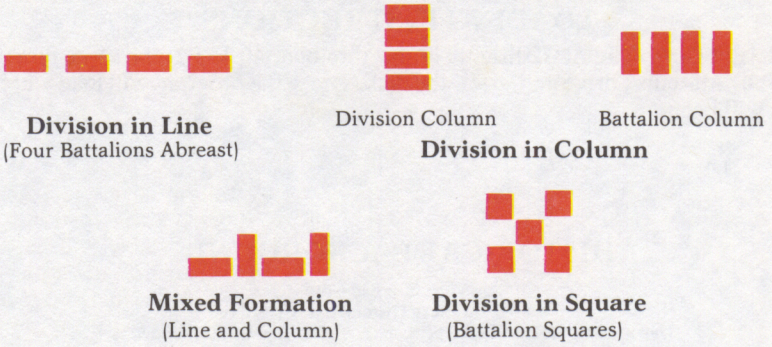
Morale is very important: when a unit's morale falls to a certain level it will not attack and may even rout (run) from the battlefield. Morale is reduced by casualties and also by "pushing" the unit too hard in the movement phase (i.e. having it "March" or "Force March"). When a unit is fired upon, the computer will check its morale against a random number it computed. If the unit's morale level is below this random number, the unit will fall back a single square. A unit with a morale level lower than 40 morale points will refuse to be moved into contact with an enemy unit (but if it is currently in contact it, will not necessarily retreat). A unit with a morale level below 30 points will not move at all. Once a unit's morale falls below 20 points it will deteriorate into a mob and rout from the battlefield.

IMPORTANT: a unit not under attack will regain two morale points per turn.

FORMATIONS

There are four basic infantry formations: Line, Column, Mixed and Square. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Following is a schematic of the various formations:

Examples of Infantry Formations



Division in Line
(Four Battalions Abreast)

Division Column

Battalion Column

Division in Column

Mixed Formation
(Line and Column)

Division in Square
(Battalion Squares)

The **Line** can inflict the most casualties on a target unit and receive less harm when fired upon, but it has a lower morale boosting effect than the other formations and cavalry has a very bad effect upon it.

The **Column** formation, along with the square, gives the best morale boost to the men involved, and it can move very fast. But the column allows only a small number of the men in the formation to fire their weapons at any given time and when fired upon, the casualties it suffers can be very heavy.

The **Mixed** formation attempts to use the best of both the line and column formations. The battalions or regiments that comprise the unit (division) are arranged in such a way that some are in a line formation and some are in a column formation. This formation has a higher rate of fire than a column formation and does not take as many casualties as a column formation, but it does not have the high morale-boosting bonus or movement rate of the column formation. Further, the Mixed formation will take greater casualties than the line formation.

The best thing that can be said about the **Square** formation is that it is the only good defense against a cavalry attack. Its movement rate is very slow, and it will take heavy casualties when fired upon as only a limited number of men can fire their weapons at any given time (unless of course the square is surrounded).

During the movement phase you will be asked by the computer if you want to change a unit's formation. If you want to change its formation, tap the joystick handle to the LEFT. Then tap the joystick handle until the desired formation is shown, then press the "fire" button to effect the change in formation. If a unit changes formation it will not be able to move.

ENDING THE TACTICAL GAME

The Tactical Game ends on turn 48 or by pressing the OPTION key on the computer console. Pressing the button should only be done by the mutual consent of both players.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

ATARI® DISK: The Atari diskette is an "Auto-boot" disk. Put the game diskette into your Atari disk drive and "boot" the disk. The game program will load and the game will begin.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

by Vincent J. Esposito
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Burdened with political, financial, and military problems, Napoleon had hoped that the Allies would go into winter quarters long enough for him to rebuild France's defenses. His military planning was circumscribed by the overriding need to defend Paris – his capital, major arsenal, and principal communication and mobilization center. It was imperative to hold as much of France as he could, in order to draw conscripts from as wide an area as possible. He would therefore maneuver to cover Paris, seeking to catch and destroy the Allies in detail. It was reasonably certain that Bluecher and Schwarzenberg would not pull smoothly together, and that disagreements between the allied sovereigns might trip up their operations. Until mid-December, he expected that the main Allied offensive would strike directly across the lower Rhine, and so grouped his main strength accordingly. Fortresses on and behind the lower Rhine were given priority on repairs and supplies. Any Allied offensive through the Low Countries would be checked by this fortress system, backed by Maison's field army.

Initially, Napoleon planned to withdraw all French troops from northern Italy, leaving his Italian troops in that area's numerous fortresses to delay the Austrians as best they could. Eugene demurred: His "French" units had been filled up with Piedmontese conscripts, who were sure to desert if ordered northward; his Italian units were becoming increasingly unreliable. Any transfer of French troops therefore merely would open southern France to Bellegarde. Reluctantly, Napoleon agreed. As for Spain, Napoleon still hoped that his treaty with Ferdinand would take effect. If it did not, he could give Soult only "my confidence" and conscripts to replace the veterans he had taken from him. Suchet still kept the initiative in Catalonia, but – apparently to maintain pressure on Ferdinand – Napoleon was loath to withdraw him.

On 1 January 1814, Napoleon ordered qualified officers from the frontier areas detailed to their home districts to organize partisan units. This was too late to permit effective preparations, the frontiers already being partially overrun. Few weapons were available, the civil authorities were timid, and the population generally was apathetic. There was no existing social organization (such as the clergy in Spain) to inspire, stiffen, and coordinate such a rising. Various former Revolutionary hotheads whom Napoleon sent out on that mission proved largely ineffective.

Once the Allied dispositions became evident, Napoleon ordered (13 January) Marmont and Macdonald to operate against Bluecher. Victor (then at Strasbourg) and Ney (at Metz) would check Schwarzenberg along the line Vosges Mountains-Nancy-Epinal-Langres; Mortier would move from Namur to Langres to support them. If finally forced back by superior numbers, the marshals must continue to cover Paris. Only Antwerp and Mayence were strongly garrisoned by first-line troops, the greatest possible use being made elsewhere of national guards, limited-service veterans, and conscripts. (However small, such garrisons would tie down considerable numbers of Bluecher's and Schwarzenberg's armies until Landwehr units could be brought up from the interior of Germany.) Augereau would form a new army at Lyons for an advance to the northeast across Schwarzenberg's communications, once these were sufficiently exposed.

Crossing the Swiss frontier at Basel on 21 December, Schwarzenberg advanced on Langres with his main column, detaching Bubna toward Lyons to cover his left flank, and dropping another corps in Switzerland to support a revolt by its pro-Austrian "aristocratic" party. Bleucher forced the Rhine against little or no opposition on 1 January, left a force to blockade Mayence (Mainz), and pushed on across the Saar River. Winzingerode crossed a few days later, moving on Liege to assist Buelow and Graham, who had got thoroughly entangled among the Low Countries' fortresses.

Eastern France was quickly overrun, the open cities surrendering to handfuls of Allied cavalry. In part, this servile behavior resulted from Metternich's psychological warfare (reinforced by Schwarzenberg's proclamation that the Allies came in peace, friendship, and perfect discipline to liberate France), but the demoralizing behavior of several marshals contributed significantly. Macdonald dithered; Marmont retired in order, but with inappropriate speed; Victor scampered behind the Vosges, making no effort to defend Strasbourg; Ney did nothing. When his subordinates won early successes near Epinal, he did not support them, and ended by practically abandoning his corps to Victor. Only Mortier did his duty, fighting an aggressive, eighteen-day delaying action from Langres back to Bar-sur-Aube, with numerous minor victories. Seeing his defenses coming apart prematurely, on 19 January Napoleon sent Berthier to relieve Victor, place Marmont in command of all available troops, and organize a defensive line along the Meuse River. Berthier found the line of the Meuse already abandoned; with howling confusion everywhere there was little he could do.

Finally getting governmental affairs into order, Napoleon reached Chalons on 26 January, leaving Joseph Bonaparte as his lieutenant in Paris. This was a major blunder, but in part unavoidable. Joseph was Napoleon's older brother, and so expected employment in some important capacity. If not so honored, he was perfectly capable of getting involved (as in 1805) in subversive intrigues. To complicate matters further, Paris still was practically unfortified, Napoleon having been reluctant to upset that volatile city by any such indication of possible danger.

At Chalons-sur-Marne (hereafter referred to as Chalons), Napoleon learned that Bluecher was approaching St. Dizier; Schwarzenberg, Bar-sur-Aube. Both armies were considerably weakened by detachments left to blockade various fortified towns, but they were very close to establishing contact. If Napoleon was to catch either one separately, he must strike promptly. Bluecher, advancing with the apparent intention of reaching Paris ahead of Schwarzenberg, was the nearer and weaker target.

After flushing Victor from St. Dizier on 26 January, Bleucher left a small rear guard there and swaggered westward through Brienne to pick a fight with Mortier. Napoleon immediately seized St. Dizier behind him. Poorly served by his cavalry, Bluecher considered this action merely a minor demonstration against his communications, and continued on westward.

Sending Marmont farther east to block the roads through St. Dizier and Joinville, Napoleon now advanced on Brienne with the bulk of his forces, and ordered Mortier toward Arcis-sur-Aube. One copy of Mortier's orders was intercepted. Bleucher received it early on 29 January at Brienne, where he had only Olsufief's Corps, Sacken having gone ahead through Lesmont. Thus warned, he barely managed to recall Sacken before Napoleon struck, and had the further good fortune to be joined by the advance guard (Pahlen, 3,000 cavalry) of Wittgenstein's corps. Attacking piecemeal (at about 1430) as his units arrived, Napoleon finally turned Bleucher out of Brienne, French conscripts charging in unskilled fury to defeat equal numbers of Prussian and Russian veterans. (Losses: Napoleon, 3,000; Bluecher, 4,000). On the 30th, Napoleon forced Bluecher out of La Rothiere, and Mortier reached Arcis-sur-Aube, establishing liaison with Napoleon through Lesmont. Macdonald was ordered to leave Sebastiani at St. Menehould and move the rest of his command to Chalons; Vitry was hastily fortified. His flanks thus covered, Napoleon remained in contact with Bluecher and awaited developments. He had just missed destroying Bluecher, but there was always the chance that the Allies would become rattled. At any rate, his presence east of Brienne should force them to pause and concentrate, thus giving him more time in which to press his mobilization. Heavy snowstorms hampered his reconnaissance, and he waited a few hours too long.

The Allies had concentrated haphazardly, as Bluecher's retreating columns floundered into Schwarzenberg's advance. Regrouping, they gradually decided to mass toward their center and attack Napoleon on 1 February. (They also informed Caulaincourt that a congress to discuss peace terms would open at Chatillon-sur-Seine on 3 February.) The attack on Napoleon was entrusted to Bluecher, with Sacken's and Olsufief's corps of his own army, and two corps from the Army of Bohemia. In addition, Wrede's corps – originally ordered to St. Dizier – was diverted, on Wrede's suggestion, to operate against Napoleon's left flank. Barclay, with the Russian reserve and Guard, would support Bluecher.

Suspecting that the Allies meant to fix him at La Rothiere while attacking Mortier (whose outposts were under Austrian pressure), Napoleon ordered a withdrawal toward Troyes at 0900 on 1 February. Ney had already moved off when Grouchy (now the army cavalry commander) reported Bluecher advancing. Lacking time to complete his withdrawal, Napoleon took up position and recalled Ney. Bleucher attacked blindly, concentrating on La Rothiere (the strongest point in Napoleon's line). Barclay reinforced Bluecher, and La Rothiere finally fell. Napoleon sent Ney's leading division (Rottembourg) against La Rothiere in a counter-attack that put Barclay back on his heels, then expertly disengaged, covered by the snow, darkness, and Drouot's guns. The exhausted Allies did not pursue. Each army lost approximately 6,000; Napoleon also had to abandon 50 guns.

Inflated with overconfidence at having defeated Napoelon on French soil, and certain he was no longer dangerous, the Allies decided to march immediately on Paris. Bleucher was to advance through Chalons and along the south bank of the Marne River to Meaux; Schwarzenberg through Troyes and astride the Seine River; Wittgenstein and Seslawin's Cossacks would advance between them to maintain contact.

On 3 February, Napoleon reached Troyes and began reorganizing his army, now further weakened by more than 4,000 desertions. (He was not well received, the inhabitants hoarding their food to meet expected Allied requisitions.) Morale was low, information concerning the Allies scanty. However, the Allies had lost contact with him on the 3d, when Marmont outmaneuvered Wrede east of Arcis-sur-Aube, and Grouchy defeated an attempt by Russian cavalry to cut the Troyes-Arcis road. Yorck had found Vitry too strong to rush, and Schwarzenberg's left-flank corps crossed columns with the Russian-Prussian guards and reserves at Vendeuvre, creating a mammoth traffic jam.

Napoleon sent Mortier southeast on a major reconnaissance in force, which thoroughly mauled Schwarzenberg's outposts in that direction. Already worried by Augereau's concentration at Lyons, and Platov's recent defeat at Sens, Schwarzenberg became fearful of an impending offensive against his communications and decided to mass toward his left. Accordingly, he recalled Wittgenstein south of the Aube River; Seslawin was ordered (possibly through error) to Schwarzenberg's extreme left flank.

Bluecher's only reaction to Schwarzenberg's warning of Wittgenstein's shift southward was the joyful idea that Napoleon would be too hard pressed to oppose the Army of Silesia. (He apparently was not told of Seslawin's departure.) by 6 February, Bleucher's army was in four separate groups – all practically out of mutual supporting distance – plunging headlong across Napoleon's front while Sacken cut across country toward La Ferte to head him off. Olsufief followed a day behind Sacken to maintain some contact with Kleist and Kapzevitsch.

Napoleon had contemplated attacking Schwarzenberg, whose position he considered very faulty. Bluecher, however, was beginning to threaten Paris, and was the easier and nearer target. During 5-7 February, Napoleon concentrated at Nogent-sur-Seine; on the 7th, he ordered Marmont to Sezanne. The newly created VII Corps (largely veterans from Spain), which was forming at Nogent, was mistakenly entrusted to Oudinot.

At Nogent, Napoleon was caught in a blizzard of ill tidings. Northward, Buelow had entered Brussels; Antwerp was cut off. Paris was clutched by a mounting panic, with Joseph one of the worst afflicted. Murat had joined the Allies. At Chatillon, the Allies met Caulaincourt with the blunt announcement that negotiations must be on the basis of France's 1789 frontier – not her "natural boundaries." Napoleon kept his head and nerve. Realizing that he could not afford further retreats, he cooly held to his central position at Nogent and sought to determine the general positions of Bluecher's various corps. During 8 February, he sent most of his cavalry and part of the Guard to join Marmont at Sezanne. Victor was left with Gerard and Milhaud to cover Nogent and contain Schwarzenberg; if too hard-pressed, he was authorized to retire to the north bank of the Seine. Oudinot was at Provins, completing the organization of his corps. He also exercised temporary control over Pajol and Allix.

Information concerning Bluecher was unexpectedly difficult to obtain, but Yorck was known to be following Macdonald and, early on 9 February, Marmont reported Sacken halted at Montmirail. Napoleon immediately left Nogent, followed by the rest of the Guard. (Rottembourg's Young Guard Division, which had lost heavily at La Rothiere, escorted the army's trains to Provins.) Meanwhile, on 8 February, Macdonald had outdistanced Yorck and escaped across the Marne River at Chateau-Thierry, burning the bridge behind him. On the 9th, he recrossed the Marne at La Ferte, but was attacked by Sacken's cavalry, which he had considerable difficulty beating off.

Continued on page 16

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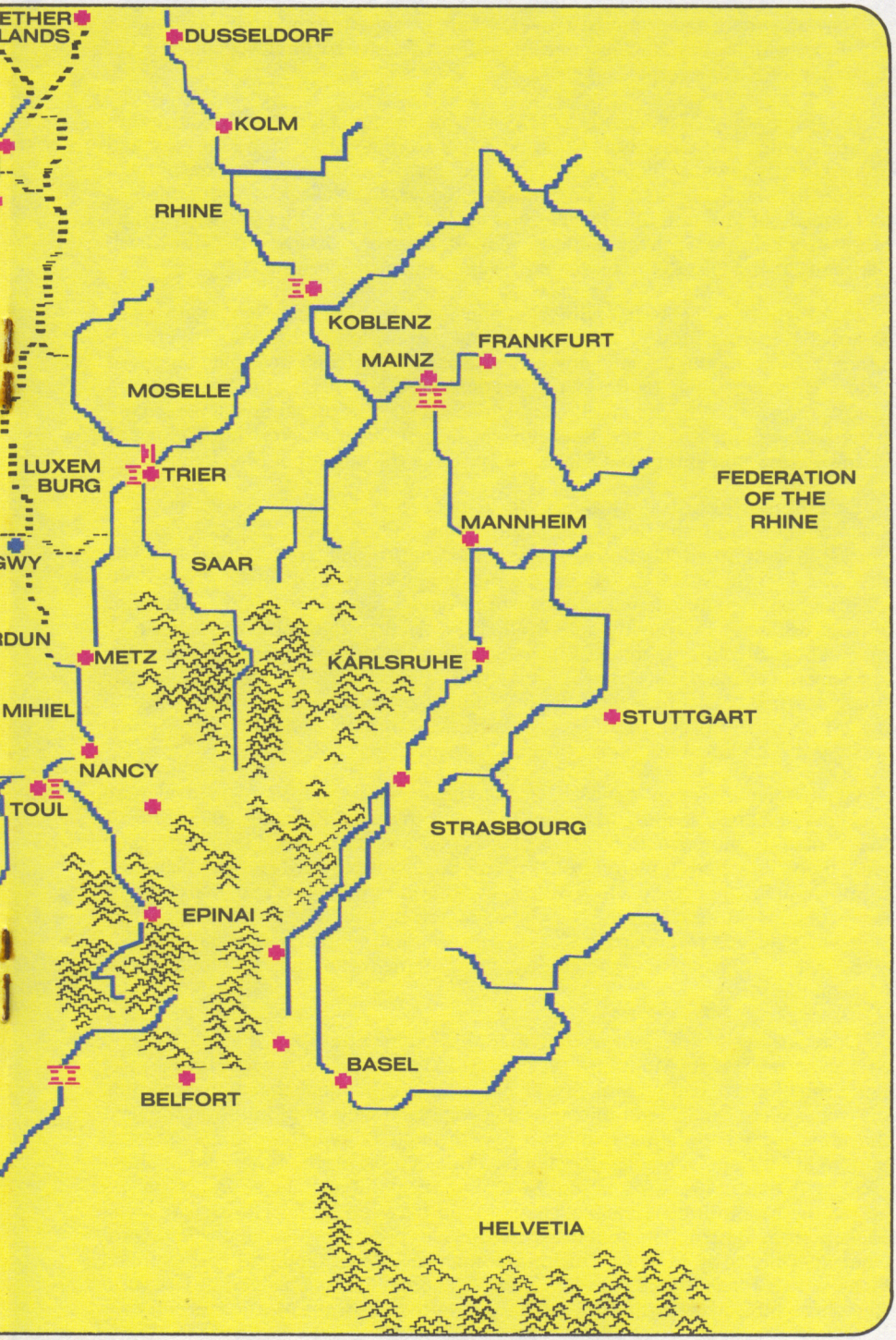
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HELVETIA

Schwarzenberg had occupied Troyes, where he halted to ponder his next move. Finally concluding that Napoleon meant to offer a decisive battle at Nogent, he asked Bluecher for Kleist's corps.

While pursuing Macdonald, Yorck, had had some contact with Marmont's cavalry, which had chased his Cossacks away from Sezanne on 8 February and probed briefly toward Champaubert the next day. Its appearance had been noted by Bluecher's staff, but the only precaution taken was to halt Sacken – as previously mentioned – at Montmirail. Bluecher was at Champaubert with Olsufief when he received (9 February) Schwarzenberg's request. He at once issued orders for Kleist, Kapzevitsch and Olsufief to march on Sezanne the next morning.

That night (9-10 February), Bluecher somehow learned that Napoleon was in Sezanne. Knowing little of the strength and disposition of the various French forces, he was unable to make any estimate as to Napoleon's possible courses of action. However, since La Rothiere, he considered Napoleon little better than a fugitive from justice. Consequently, though he did take the precaution of personally going back to join Kleist and Kapzevitsch, he left Olsufief very much alone at Champaubert, and authorized Sacken to continue the pursuit of Macdonald.

Pushing northward along roads "six feet deep in mud," Napoleon got considerable help from the local inhabitants, who, having enjoyed a brief acquaintanceship with Allied "liberation" turned out to help drag his guns along. Early on the 10th, French cavalry developed the isolated position of Olsufief's weak corps. Olsufief had been threatened with court-martial for poor performance at Brienne and La Rothiere; thoroughly sore-headed, he tried to fight and was squashed. Meanwhile, Bluecher marched Kleist and Kapzevitsch toward Sezanne, placidly ignoring the sound of battle to the west. About dusk, near Fere-Champenoise, he finally learned of Olsufief's disaster, and counter-marched hastily to Vertus, sending off an urgent order recalling Sacken to Montmirail, Sacken had continued westward; Yorck had not budged from Chateau-Thierry.

Olsufief having been disposed of, Napoleon swung westward to deal with Sacken and Yorck, sending Marmont to Etoges to watch Bluecher, and ordering Macdonald to counter-march eastward. Oudinot was told to send Leval's division (and, if possible, Rottembourg) from Provins northward toward La Ferte Gaucher. If Napoleon fought his expected battle near Montmirail, they were to march to the sound of guns. Mortier, closing Napoleon's march column with an Old Guard division, was to leave a rear guard in Sezanne and establish contact with Leval. At 1900, 10 February, Nansouty marched for Montmirail, the rest of the army following at 0300 on the 11th.

Disregarding Yorck's suggestion that they concentrate at Chateau-Thierry, Sacken had started for Montmirail at 2100 on 10 February, burning the bridge at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre behind him. (Yorck himself made no move that night, claiming his troops were exhausted.) Encountering Napoleon west of Montmirail the next morning, Sacken attempted to bull his way through, but was outmaneuvered and outfought by Napoleon's slightly smaller force. Yorck reached the field at about 1530, with part of his corps, to find Sacken on the point of collapse and Napoleon across the Montmirail – Chateau-Thierry road between them. His arrival saved Sacken from destruction, but he was himself promptly driven back toward Chateau-Thierry by Mortier. During the night, Sacken's shattered corps groped along woods roads to join Yorck; both corps commanders received orders from Bluecher – himself retreating toward Bergeres – to recross the Marne and make for Reims, where the Army of Silesia would reassemble.

Oudinot had dispatched Leval as ordered, but retained Rottembourg, since Schwarzenberg had advanced from Troyes on 10 February. On the 11th, Wittgenstein and Wrede forced Victor back across the Seine, except for a rear guard left in Nogent.The Prince of Wurttemburg captured Sens; on orders from Victor, Pajol retired behind the Seine at Montereau, blowing up the bridge there.

On 12 February, Napoleon renewed his attack, Ney leading. Yorck and Sacken barely escaped across the Marne, with over-all losses of 7,000 men, more than 20 guns, and most of their trains. French losses were 2,500. Much to Napoleon's disappointment, Macdonald failed to complete the victory by an energetic march eastward.

Mortier was ordered to continue the pursuit, but the Chateau-Thierry bridge could not be rebuilt until late on the 13th. By then, Yorck and Sacken – who had not stood on the order of their going – were safely north of the Ourcq River. (One of Napoleon's worst handicaps during 1814 was the lack of a small bridge train. Despite repeated orders, it was mid-March before Clarke produced some clumsy pontoons).

Learning of Schwarzenberg's offensive during the 13th, Napoleon began planning a concentration around Montereau, ordering Macdonald (reinforced by a newly arrived National Guard division) to that town. However, that night, Marmont reported Bluecher again moving west. Bluecher apparently had concluded that Napoleon would already be countermarching to meet Schwarzenberg; having collected some additional cavalry, he proposed to attack the Emperor's rear. Too weak to oppose this force, Marmont was skillfully fighting a delaying action back from Etoges.

Resolved to teach Bluecher a lesson, Napoleon ordered Marmont to draw the Prussian on toward Montmirail, where he concentrated his available forces. During the early morning of the 14th, Marmont retired from Fromentieres to á strong position west of Vauchamps. Advancing carelessly, Bluecher's advance guard (Zieten) attacked him there, but was trapped and largely destroyed as Grouchy burst in on its right flank. Meeting its fugitives east of Vauchamps and glimpsing the bearskin caps of the Guard, Bluecher quickly ordered a retreat, though he actually seems to have outnumbered Napoleon. The retreat was initially in splendid order, wagons and artillery on the road, infantry in squares to either side, cavalry screening the flanks and rear. Though heavily pounded by Drouot's guns, the veteran Russian and Prussian infantry kept their ranks, beating off repeated charges by Nansouty's Guard cavalry. But, meanwhile, Grouchy led Bordessoulle and St. Germain along country roads north of the main route. East of Champaubert, he swung to his right, scattered the Allied cavalry, and blocked Bluecher's retreat. Had Grouchy's horse artillery been able to keep up with him through the deep clay mud, Bluecher's destruction would have been certain. As it was, by desperate fighting, Bluecher finally broke through and made for Chalons, dropping a Russian division at Etoges to cover his retreat. Napoleon left Marmont to carry on the pursuit and countermarched to Montmirail. About 2030, Marmont pounced on the Russians in Etoges, practically wiping them out. In this action, Bluecher lost 7,000 men, 16 guns, and most of his trains. Napoleon had 600 casualties. Farther north, advancing to join Bluecher who he thought was near Chateau-Thierry. Winzingerode had surprised and captured Soissons on 13-14 February. On 16 February, hearing of Bluecher's defeat, he fell back rapidly to Reims. Mortier herded Sacken and Yorck toward Chalons.

During 12 February, Schwarzenberg had got across the Seine River, when Wrede surprised the weak National Guard detachment at Bray. His flank thus threatened,

Victor had to abandon Nogent, though his rear guard (under General Bourmont, a former Royalist) had held his south-bank bridgehead against Allied assaults all day. Oudinot, handicapped by the absence of Leval's division (which Napoleon blamed himself for detaching), arrived only in time to clash indecisively with Wrede on the 13th. That night, both Oudinot and Victor retired toward Nangis, intending to withdraw behind the Yerres River. Macdonald reached Guignes late on the 14th, but provided no new inspiration. An unidentified officer hastily ordered the army's trains toward Paris, fanning panic in that unstable city. A long ripple of Allied cavalry and Cossacks now fanned out across the countryside up to the Loing River, their outriders even penetrating to Fontainebleau.

A new factor now permeated the campaign. Allied claims of "coming as friends and liberators" and of maintaining exact discipline had been deliberate falsehoods from the start. Advancing out of the devastated Rhineland, with long miles of ruined roads between them and their bases, the Allies could not feed their troops from their own countries. (The Russians had never had a supply system worth mentioning; in Germany, they had foraged on ally, neutral, and enemy with equal informality.) From the first, the Allies had lived off the country – Schwarzenberg generally by requisition, Bluecher by cruder methods. All were as demanding and hard-handed as the French had been in Germany and Austria.

News that Bluecher had been thoroughly defeated, losing a third of his army, dazed the Allied high command. Its first reaction (based on the supposition that Napoleon was pursuing Bluecher toward Chalons) was to send Wittgenstein and Wrede north through Sezanne to attack him from the rear. Then came word that Napoleon had broken contact with the Army of Silesia. Apprehensive but uncertain, the Army of Bohemia ended by milling in place "to await developments" during most of 15-16 February. On the 17th, Wittgenstein and Wrede were ordered to fall back gradually through Bray. Barclay would mass the Russian-Prussian guards and reserves at Nogent. Elsewhere, Seslawin's Cossacks were wandering toward Orleans; more important, Buelow was moving south out of Belgium, having been relieved there by the newly organized corps of the Duke of Weimar.

Napoleon's original plans were to follow up and finish off Bluecher, then to move south through Vitry into Schwarzenberg's rear. This probably would have been decisive. Bluecher and his subordinates were the toughest, if not the brightest of the Allied commanders. With them gone, the Allied sovereigns would not have lingered to risk their own necks. But Schwarzenberg's fumbling advance on Paris tripped Napoleon up in full career: Paris was still unfortified; Joseph was butter-hearted; Victor, Oudinot, and Macdonald plainly were not equal to gaining their Emperor the three or four days he would need. Hastily regrouping, Napoleon came southwestward by forced marches, reaching Guignes on the 16th. Mortier and Marmont were left to maintain pressure on Bluecher and Winzingerode; if attacked by greatly superior numbers, they were to fall back slowly, always covering Paris. If Bluecher joined Schwarzenberg, Marmont was to rejoin Napoleon.

From Guignes, Napoleon lashed his subordinates with urgent orders. All reserves from Paris would join him at once; Joseph must stir himself to get Paris as well fortified as available time and means would permit. Maison would concentrate the scattered garrisons throughout the Low Countries and take the offensive, thus forcing Buelow to return to Holland. Augereau was to advance up the Saone River from Lyons against Schwarzenberg's communications – Eugene must hold northern Italy as long as possible.

Early on the 17th, Gerard and the cavalry corps wrecked Wittgenstein's advance guard (Pahlen, 4,300) at Mormant, then swung on Wrede and drove him back through Nangis with heavy losses. There, Napoleon broadened the front of his offensive: Oudinot and Kellerman advanced against Wittgenstein; Victor, Gerard, and cavalry under Bordessoulle (most of whose corps was with Marmont) and L'Heritier moved to seize Montereau; Macdonald, supported by the Guard, advanced on Bray; Pajol, with Pacthod, came up the east bank of the Seine; and Allix and Charpentier moved on Fontainebleau. Wittgenstein attempted to support Pahlen but, his ranks disordered by terrified fugitives, was chased through Provins. Gerard and Bordessoulle harried Wrede from position to position until nightfall. During the night, he withdrew to Bray. Victor did not press the advance of his own corps; after a day in which he let Gerard do most – if not all – of the infantry fighting, he halted for the night at a comfortable chateau three miles northeast of Montereau.

Montereau, with its stone bridges across the Seine and Yonne rivers, was important to the Allies, since it offered the best bolt hole for their left-flank units. After considerable indecision, Schwarzenberg ordered the Crown Prince of Wuettemberg to hold this town until at least the night of 18 February. Reinforced by some of Bianchi's corps, the Prince had organized a strong position on the north bank of the Seine. During the 17th Pajol had pushed back his outposts, but lacked strength to do more. Victor arrived late (0900) on the 18th, attacked piecemeal, and took a series of rough repulses. Learning of this, Napoleon replaced him with Gerard and brought the Guard forward. Methodically massing all available guns, Gerard gained artillery superiority, which grew overwhelming as the Guard artillery began coming into action. At about 1500, a carefully coordinated assault got onto the ridge-line which formed the key of the Allied position. An Allied attempt at an orderly disengagement was broken when Napoleon personally brought his artillery forward to the ridge. Pajol – half-crippled by earlier wounds – lifted his raw troopers forward, smashing across the Seine bridge, through Montereau, and over the Yonne bridge, sabering the massed Allies like sheep. Old Marshal Lefebvre (now attached to Napoleon's staff) led an equally wild gallop by the Imperial staff and escort along the Bray road. A rapid advance by Guard infantry consolidated the cavalry's gains. Allied losses were 5,000 men and 15 guns; French, approximately 1,500. Pajol was disabled for the rest of the year.

Also during the 18th, Macdonald and Oudinot cleared the north bank of the Seine, but found the Bray and Nogent bridges destroyed. The Allied forces west of the Loing River were driven in by Allix, but got away by detouring far to the south, under cover of pretended negotiations.

On 17 February, Schwarzenberg had already sent Berthier a sniveling and lying message stating that – since the preliminaries of a peace treaty on Napoleon's terms had been signed at Chatillon (in fact, the Allies had broken off negotiations on the 10th) – he had halted "offensive movements against the French armies," and must request that Napoleon return the courtesy. He then ordered a headlong retreat to Troyes to be covered by Wrede. Seslawin was recalled, and Bluecher instructed to join Wittgenstein at Mery-sur-Seine by the 21st.

Lacking a bridge train, Napoleon had to funnel his advance through Montereau until Macdonald restored the bridge at Bray. This delay, plus the haste in which Schwarzenberg retreated, resulted in the French largely losing contact with the Allies for two days.

Schwarzenberg needed the respite. In addition to the excited yammerings of his three sovereign commanders and their polyglot personal staffs (not to mention the English representatives), he was afflicted by highly exaggerated reports of Augereau's activities – which, so far, actually had amounted to nothing more than continuous complaints and excuses. The Troyes area, relatively unproductive in normal times, already had been eaten up by both armies. Disease, hunger, bad weather, and recent defeats had left the Army of Bohemia shaky. Soldiers and commanders alike had little appetite for a stand-up fight against Napoleon, especially since recent intelligence reports had grossly overestimated the strength of his army. (Seslawin, whom the Allied commanders considered an accurate source, reported that Napoleon had 180,000 men!) Schwarzenberg knew he could lose the war in a few hours; defeat would mean a retreat through a vindictively hostile countryside, with Augereau advancing into his rear. Also, he personally commanded the last army that Austria would be able to put into the field, and had no intention of sacrificing it for the sake of temporary allies, whose known postwar aims were inimical to Austrian expansion. Insofar as can be determined, by the evening of 21 February he had made up his mind to continue his retreat. To screen it – from Napoleon, Alexander, and the King of Prussia alike – he ordered a heavy reconnaissance in force all across his front, ostensibly to locate the advancing French.

Moving forward at about noon on the 22nd, this reconnaissance promptly collided with Napoleon's cavalry screen, and was everywhere beaten and driven in. Following up, Oudinot's advance guard rushed the Allies out of the Mery suburb on the west bank of the Seine. It then forced its way across the ruined bridge and stormed into Mery itself, but had to withdraw when the Allies fired the town. (Bluecher, still clamoring for an advance on Paris, had joined Wittgenstein here on the 21st.) Reaching the front, Napoleon quickly assessed the situation: Bluecher and Wittgenstein were on the east bank of the flooded Seine; Schwarzenberg was west of that river, in front of Troyes; it was too late to attack that evening, especially since his own army had not closed up. He would leave a part of Oudinot's veterans to watch Bluecher and Wittgenstein, confident that it would take those Allied commanders twenty-four hours either to force a crossing at Mery or to find a new one. With the rest of his army, he would attack Schwarzenberg the next morning. The odds would be heavy – some 70,000 French, mostly green conscripts and national guardsmen, against more than 100,000 veteran Allies – but he was confident, and his troops wild with enthusiasm.

Schwarzenberg likewise saw the situation clearly. In quiet defiance of the Czar and the King of Prussia, he asserted his titular authority and continued his withdrawal, sending the Prince of Lichtenstein to beg Napoleon for an armistice. Though inglorious, these measures probably saved his army. Wrede was left with one division to hold Troyes until the 24th, which he accomplished by threatening to burn that city if attacked, but promising to evacuate the next morning. Napoleon entered Troyes about 0600 on the 24th, and this time he received a roaring welcome, one of the most heartfelt of his career.

During the 24th, Gerard, Oudinot, and Macdonald, supported by Ney, energetically followed up the Army of Bohemia's disorderly withdrawal. To climax Schwarzenberg's perplexities, Augereau finally (and reluctantly) had bestirred himself. His advance elements had driven Bubna back on Geneva, producing anguished howls for help.

Assuming that Bluecher would join Schwarzenberg's retreat to the southeast, Napoleon had ordered (23 February) Marmont to rejoin him, while Mortier moved southward to Chateau-Thierry. To establish contact with Marmont as quickly as possible, he dispatched Bordesoulle northward via Anglure with a detachment of recently arrived replacements.

However, Bluecher began shifting his forces northward during the 24th. Learning of these movements that same day, Napoleon remained uncertain as to whether Bluecher was taking a circuitous route to join Schwarzenberg, retiring on Chalons, or preparing another advance on Paris. The next day, he took the precaution of sending Ney's Young Guard Corps toward Arcis, and Victor (now forgiven, and commanding another newly organized Young Guard corps) to Mery. Arrighi's newly formed infantry division, then enroute from Nogent to Mery, was ordered to return. Once Bluecher's actual route was determined, Napoleon could march from Troyes to support any of these three commanders, or continue to press Schwarzenberg. Reports were soon forthcoming. Marmont had advanced from Sezanne on the 24th, but found the Army of Silesia in strength between him and the Aube River. Having only approximately 6,000 men, he retired to a strong position behind Sezanne. Bordesoulle was blocked by superior forces south of Anglure.

Responding to Schwarzenberg's plea for an armistice, Napoleon sent an aid-de-camp, General Flahoult, to the Allied headquarters to negotiate on the basis of the Allies' first proposals – the natural frontiers of France. Hostilities would continue until the armistice was signed. Napoleon was undoubtedly sincere, after his own fashion; he would require a lengthy "truce" (as he later termed it) to reorganize his armies. The Allies wanted only time enough to disengage and regroup their forces.

On 25 February, Alexander, Francis, Frederick William, and Castelreagh (the British representative) held a council of war at Bar-sur-Aube. Agreeing that Augereau menaced their rear, they dispatched Hesse-Homburg with the equivalent of two Austrian corps to reinforce Bubna. After much brawling, they further agreed to retire to Langres, there to fight a defensive battle if Napoleon pursued them, or to resume their offensive if he turned on Bluecher. Authorizing Bluecher to operate as he saw fit, they transferred Buelow's and Winzingerode's corps to his command from Bernadotte's army. (Bernadotte's objections were squelched by a blunt British threat to drop him from their payroll.)

Bluecher once more marched on Paris, with Yorck, Kleist, Kapzevitsch, and Sacken, ordering Buelow to advance through Soissons and Dammartin; Winzingerode through Fismes and Meaux. Langeron's corps, now approaching from Mayence, would cover his rear. Hoping to stimulate Schwarzenberg, he sent the latter a purposely false report (25 February) that Napoleon was already pursuing the Army of Silesia.

Napoleon was slow to believe that Bluecher was again deliberately asking to be knocked on the head. When, on 26 February, Marmont reported being driven back to La Ferte-Gaucher Napoleon merely ordered Ney to cross at Arcis and attack Bluecher's rear. The next morning, finally certain that Bluecher was marching on Paris again, he sent Ney (with Victor, Arrighi, and Bordessoule's detachment attached) in pursuit, and marched from Troyes with the remainder of his Guard. Macdonald was left 40,000 good troops to hold the line of the Aube River. Both he and Caulaincourt (who was still attempting to negotiate) were to spread the word that Napoleon would shortly be at Bar-sur-Aube. Clarke was once more vainly urged to provide a small bridge train; Augereau to concentrate his troops, and to either advance through Geneva toward Langres or join the main army via Dijon.

Mortier had come boldly forward to join Marmont at La Ferte-Gaucher. On the 27th, under heavy pressure from Yorck and Kleist, the two marshals retired on Meaux, hoping to hold the north bank of the Marne. Finding that Sacken had reached Meaux ahead of them, they cleared him out. Bluecher thereupon began crossing the Marne at La Ferte, intending to turn their left flank. The marshals shifted north, defeating Kleist and Kapzevitsch around Lizy on the 28th. Furious, Bluecher launched a coordinated attack across the Ourcq River on 1 March, but was repulsed with considerable loss.

Bluecher planned to renew his attack on Mortier and Marmont the next morning but, hearing rumors of French troops near Sezanne, took the precaution of ordering his entire army north of the Marne. Late on 1 March, couriers from Tettenborn (whose Cossacks had been screening Bluecher's left) warned that Napoleon was on his traces.

On 28 February, Bluecher had received a letter from Schwarzenberg, confirming his command of Buelow's, Winzingerode's and Weimar's corps, and directing Bluecher to establish a mobile column between their armies to maintain liaison. Lacking sufficient troops to form such a column, Bluecher replied that he would station Winzingerode at Reims as a substitute. (Langeron's corps was still out of supporting distance, except for a small advance guard, while Weimar would have to remain in Holland until relieved by Bernadotte.) Bluecher now ordered a withdrawal northward, intending to collect Buelow and Winzingerode, and offer battle on equal terms. His new subordinates, however, proved elusive. Instead of obeying his previous orders, they had concocted the scheme of taking Soissons in order to open a safe line of retreat for Bluecher. Bluecher's couriers to them, and theirs to Bluecher, either went astray or were intercepted.

Napoleon reached La Ferte during 1 March, but could only snatch Bluecher's last wagons and stragglers before the Marne bridges were cut. Once again, Napoleon's lack of a bridge train balked him; it took sixteen hours to repair the damaged La Ferte bridge. Early on the 3rd, however, Napoleon's advance guard was north of Rocourt. Just to the north, Bluecher was leaving Oulchy-le-Chateau, still ignorant of Buelow's and Winzingerode's whereabouts. His army had had three night marches and three defeats in the last seventy-two hours, and no supplies for a week, beyond what could be seized from the countryside. Certain only that Buelow had been at Laon, Bluecher decided to retire in that direction. Ahead of him was the flooded Aisne River, with good bridges at Vic, Soissons, and Berry. The first was too far west, the second in French hands, the third risky to use since Napoleon was obviously moving toward Fismes to cut between him and Reims. Bluecher had a good bridge train, but would need almost a day to bridge the Aisne and get his whole army across. His decision was to give his troops twelve hours' rest; send his trains, artillery, and part of his infantry through Berry; and cross the rest of his army by pontoon bridges near Venizel (three miles east of Soissons). Messengers were dispatched broadcast in search of Buelow and Winzingerode.

On receipt of Bluecher's deceptive report of 25 February, Alexander and Frederick William bullied Schwarzenberg into counterattacking toward Bar-sur-Aube, where Oudinot occupied an awkward position astride the river. Refusing to heed repeated warnings, Oudinot even ignored a premature, unsuccessful attack by Wrede on the 26th. Attacked by Wittgenstein the next day, he threw away the battle, leaving Leval's veteran division alone without artillery on the east bank until Kellerman insubordinately rode to its rescue. That night Oudinot retired, his disheartened troops accusing him of treason. His withdrawal uncovered Macdonald, but the latter's advance guard managed to bluff Wuettemberg into halting.

At 0700, 3 March, Bluecher received a message from Winzingerode, reporting that he had failed to storm Soissons and was preparing to withdraw to Fismes. At 1200, a second message ended Bluecher's profane rage. Soissons had capitulated!

General Moreau, the commandant of Soissons, having repulsed Winzingerode's assault, having plenty of supplies, and hearing Marmont's and Mortier's cannon, allowed Buelow's and Winzingerode's emissaries to bully him into capitulating. To crown his incompetence, he failed to blow up the Soissons bridge. Using it, and three temporary bridges. Bluecher and Winzingerode encamped across the Aisne during 4-5 March, the former's troops in considerable disorder.

Napoleon had reached Fismes on the 4th; that night, a brigade of his cavalry surprised and captured Reims. Informed of Moreau's capitulation, he continued his advance, hoping that Bluecher would attempt to defend the line of the Aisne. (He knew that Winzingerode had joined Bluecher, but believed Buelow was still north of Laon.) Bluecher did try to hold the Aisne, but mistakenly massed opposite Soissons, leaving Berry lightly defended. Grouchy's cavalry discovered this weakness; Nansouty galloped through Berry, seizing the bridge intact; and Napoleon turned northwest, attempting to cut Bluecher off from Laon.

Bluecher marched to intercept Napoleon at Craonne. His plan was to station Woronzow (Winzingerode's second-in-command) and Sacken on the dominating Craonne plateau to fix Napoleon; Winzingerode, with 11,000 cavalry and Kleist's corps, would then attack Napoleon's right rear. Napoleon came up faster than expected, Ney seizing a foothold on the plateau late on the 6th. Sacken was correspondingly slow.

With Marmont and Mortier still well to his rear, Napoleon could not risk pushing ahead toward Laon while a strong Allied force held the Craonne plateau. After studying the terrain, he planned a double envelopment to trap Woronzow, but his attack on 7 March went awry when Ney advanced prematurely. Woronzow retired in good order, covered by Sacken's cavalry. Meanwhile, poor staff work and stupid execution had so entangled Winzingerode's cavalry and Kleist's corps that even Bluecher's expert professional blasphemy only increased the confusion. (Napoleon had been prepared to trap Winzingerode's enveloping movement had it taken place.) Bluecher now ordered a concentration at Laon. (French losses in the Battle of Craonne were 5,400; Allies, 5,000.)

Napoleon believed that Craonne had been a rear-guard battle, designed to cover either a retreat into Belgium or an advance on Paris along the west bank of the Oise River. While Bluecher's army was now obviously too strong for him to destroy, he might be able to trap its rear guard and force Bluecher far enough away from Paris to permit him to again turn on Schwarzenberg. At the same time, he would pick up the garrisons of the minor fortified towns in northeastern France. A Russian rear guard checked him late on 8 March at the Etouvelles defile, but was enveloped that night by a small French detachment moving along back trails and largely destroyed. The French then pushed rapidly forward, hoping to rush Laon.

Tired of running, Bluecher had decided to stand there – an immensely strong position along a high, steep ridge, which concealed much of his army. Believing Napoleon to have 90,000 men, he feared some enveloping maneuver; Marmont's tardy appearance confirmed this worry. Finding Laon strongly held, Napoleon made several limited attacks to develop the enemy position. Winzingerode probed his left flank, but was easily discouraged. Darkness ended the fighting.

Marmont had turned sulky, twice refusing to leave Berry on the 8th. Advancing timidly the next morning, he finally took Athies. There he halted haphazardly, sending a detachment (Colonel Fabvier, 1,000) to seek contact with Napoleon, but failing to secure the dangerous Festieux defile, and quartering himself in a chateau two miles away from his troops. His weary subordinates neglected their local security.

By dark, Bluecher had a good idea of Napoleon's relative weakness and Marmont's exposed position. Yorck – supported by Kleist, Sacken, Langeron, and the Prussian cavalry – surprised Marmont's command and chased it toward Festieux. Kleist maneuvered to block the Reims road ahead of it, while cavalry galloped deeper to seize Festieux. Hearing the uproar, Fabvier countermarched, knocking Kleist away from the road and gaining Marmont time to partially rally his men. Fighting his way through to Festieux, Marmont found that defile held by 125 Old Guard infantry – the escort of a supply train that had halted there for the night! Thus saved, Marmont reorganized at Corbeny.

Elated, Bluecher ordered Yorck and Kleist to pursue Marmont to Berry, thereafter turning southwest toward Fismes; Winzingerode and Buelow would attack Napoleon frontally; Langeron and Sacken would advance through Bruyeres to cut the Soissons road behind Napoleon at L'Ange-Gardien.

At 0500, 10 March, two fugitives from Marmont's column reached Napoleon. A hasty reconnaissance having confirmed their story, Napoleon decided to remain before Laon. If only a strong rear guard held Laon, he still should be able to defeat it. If Bluecher's whole army faced him, an aggressive front would take pressure off Marmont.

Yorck and Kleist were already at Festieux; Sacken and Langeron had reached Bruyeres. But Bluecher, sick and exhausted, suddenly collapsed. Awed by Napoleon's threatening maneuvers, Gneisenau (Bluecher's chief of staff) recalled these four corps. The day passed in minor attacks and counterattacks. (French casualties for the two days were approximately 6,000; Allied 4,000.)

Napoleon withdrew after sundown. There was no pursuit until the 11th. Then, Ney's first ambush cowed it.

Halting at Soissons, Napoleon rapidly reorganized his little force. Most of his army commanders were in trouble. To compound the results of Oudinot's fumbling, Macdonald had withdrawn (6 March) his demoralized troops north of the Seine. On the 14th, much encouraged by Bluecher's report that Napoleon "had sacrificed what remained of his army" at Laon, Schwarzenberg broke across the Seine against an uninspired defense.

Augereau had complained away his opportunity to destroy Bubna. At the appearance of Hesse-Homburg's leading elements, he retreated (9 March) hastily toward Lyons. Suchet still waited in Catalonia. Wellington's methodical advance had forced Soult back on Toulouse; Bayonne was under blockade; and Bordeaux had been betrayed to the English (12 March) by its mayor. The Duke of Angouleme (nephew to the exiled Bourbon pretender, Louis XVIII) had landed there and proclaimed his uncle King of France. In Belgium, Carnot still held Antwerp; Maison had had to retire on Lille, but was waging an able hit-and-run campaign that kept Weimar largely on the defensive. Graham had broken into Bergen-op-Zoom by a brilliant night attack, but lost control of his men in the darkness, and was driven out with more than 2,500 casualties. In Italy, Eugene baffled both Bellegarde and Murat, though a British expedition occupied Genoa.

Joseph was neglecting the too-long-delayed fortification of Paris to babble for peace at any price. Diplomatically, the Allies had tightened their ranks by the Treaty of Chaumont (1 March), Castlereagh promising more money in return for more manpower and a pledge not to negotiate separately with Napoleon. Caulain-court reported that "sacrifices" probably would include his eviction from the French throne. Fortunately, he was allowed time to complete his reorganization and strengthen Soisson's defenses. Schwarzenberg moved slowly; Bluecher remained ill, and quarrels among his corps commanders (whom Gneisenau could not control) half-paralyzed his army.

Unaware of Bluecher's collapse, Napoleon hesitated to leave Soissons, though troubled by Macdonald's and Augereau's failures. His indecision was broken on 12 March by news that St. Priest (whom Bluecher had left at St. Dizier to maintain contact with Schwarzenberg) had recaptured Reims. Napoleon had the great captain's knack of turning calamity into opportunity. Sweeping forty miles across Bluecher's front, he completely surprised St. Priest on 13 March and recovered Reims. (Casualties: Allies 6,000; French, 700).

At Reims, Napoleon directly threatened Bluecher's left flank and Schwarzenberg's right. French morale rallied. To the shocked Allies, it seemed as though Napoleon was able to whistle fresh armies out of the earth. The news halted Schwarzenberg on 16 March. Bluecher had lurched southward on the 13th, Buelow reaching Compiegne, which he found too strong and Sacken approaching Soissons. Upon hearing of St. Priest's fate, Bluecher withdrew to Laon and went on the defensive, considerably heckled by French partisans. Bernadotte finally had reached Liege, but was refusing to enter France. (He hoped to become king of France, and so did not wish to overly irritate his possible future subjects. Also, should Napoleon finally win, he would be excellently placed to again turn his coat and recover Finland for Sweden from Russia.) Napoleon seems to have subtly further compromised him by dispatching an emmissary to "recall him to his duty." Consequently, Bluecher regarded Bernadotte more as a threat to his rear than a reinforcement.

At Reims, Napoleon revived his earlier plan to crush Bluecher, then to move eastward to gather in the garrisons of his frontier fortresses, then strike Schwarzenberg's rear. Both enemy armies appeared temporarily stunned, but Napoleon considered Schwarzenberg dangerously near Paris. Instead of a major move eastward, he decided on a quick, limited offensive into Schwarzenberg's rear, hoping to catch and destroy some of his corps piecemeal. One or two such small defeats should send Schwarzenberg back toward Langres, leaving Napoleon free to move boldly into Lorraine. To gain initial elbow room, he sent Ney to seize Chalons (where he captured large supply depots). He himself left Reims on 17 March, reaching Epernay that night. Clarke had at last furnished a small, unwieldly bridge train. Ney's corps was reinforced by Janssens' division, made up of detachments from various northeastern fortresses.

To contain Bluecher, Napoleon left Mortier and Marmont (approximately 21,500, including the garrisons of Soissons and Reims) to hold the Aisne River. If dislodged, they were to fight a delaying action to cover Paris. Caulaincourt now reported that peace could be secured only by unconditional acceptance of the Allied terms. Belatedly, Napoleon authorized him to offer enough concessions to keep the negotiations open. His courier, despite his diplomatic status, was detained by Allied outposts until the 21st. Meanwhile, on 19 March, with many breast-beating protestations of purity, the Allies had broken off the negotiations and called on the French nation to overthrow Napoleon.

Napoleon's approach sent the Allied command – already jittery over exaggerated reports of mass risings in the Vosges Mountains – into mental convulsions. Alexander panicked. Schwarzenberg reportedly issued three contradictory orders on the 16th alone, then collected his wits and ordered a general concentration between Arcis-sur-Aube and Troyes. Late on the 17th, however, he began redistributing his army to meet a possible offensive by Macdonald! He ended with it scattered along an eighty-mile front – as inviting a target as Napoleon ever had. Schwarzenberg himself then collapsed with an attack of gout. In this doubly vulnerable condition, the terrified Alexander managed to frighten him into ordering a general retreat on Troyes and Bar-sur-Aube.

Advancing through Mery-sur-Seine (where he destroyed Wuerttemberg's rear guard), Napoleon found indications of a hasty retreat everywhere, and reverted to his former plan of marching eastward to collect his garrisons. Confident that Bluecher would attempt no more independent offensives against Paris, he ordered Marmont and Mortier to rejoin him via Chalons. Contemptuous of Schwarzenberg, he himself marched on Arcis-sur-Aube, Ney and Sebastiani moving south of the Aube. Paris would have to defend itself; he already had sent Joseph detailed instructions for its evacuation, should that become necessary.

Napoleon was overly contemptuous of Schwarzenberg. Learning that some French troops were south of the Aube, the Austrian advanced on Mery-sur-Seine, bringing on a haphazard clash (20 March) around Arcis-sur-Aube. Here Ney and Sebastiani – led with cold tactical savagery by Napoleon – whipped off twice their numbers. (Casualties: Allies, 2,500; French, 1,700.) Concluding that Napoleon was stronger than reported, Schwarzenberg retired that night, concentrating 80,000 men for a defensive-offensive battle. Napoleon first thought that he had encountered an unusually stubborn rear guard. Moving cautiously southward on 21 March to develop the situation, he found Schwarzenberg too strong to attack, and withdrew across the Aube, covered by a smart rear-guard action. He then continued toward Vitry. Schwarzenberg attempted to follow (22 March), was repulsed, and relapsed into confusion. Southward, Augereau had managed (possibly deliberately) to lose Lyons. Northward, Bluecher had moved out, seeking to rejoin Schwarzenberg, and collided with Marmont near Fismes on 17 March. Fearing that this was another drive on Paris, Marmont begged Mortier for support. Mortier reluctantly evacuated Reims and marched west. The two marshals then received Napoleon's order to rejoin him. The Allies having reoccupied Reims after Mortier's departure, the only suitable route remaining was the long detour through Chateau-Thierry.

Vitry now had a strong Russian garrison. Napoleon bypassed it, halting at St. Dizier, where he raided Schwarzenberg's communications while waiting for Macdonald, who – as usual – was a day late. Napoleon himself – the fond, middle-aged husband of a young wife – wrote Maria Louisa an uncoded letter, describing his latest plan. This was intercepted on 22 March, with corroborating dispatches, by Allied cavalry. So informed, the Allied commanders first contemplated a quick retreat southward, but finally decided to join Bluecher, open up a new line of communications through Holland, and then seek a decisive battle between Vitry and Metz. Schwarzenberg accordingly began moving northward. During the night of 23-24 March, several dispatches from Paris to Napoleon were captured. These pictured that city as undefended and frightened; one stated that many of Napoleon's most influential domestic enemies were there. Alexander (who understood the uses of treason) studied these dispatches, then browbeat Schwarzenberg into ordering both Allied armies against Paris by way of Meaux. Winzingerode would follow Napoleon with a column of light troops to make him believe that the Allies were still pursuing him. Moving westward, Schwarzenberg struck Marmont and Mortier, driving them through Fere-Champenois in disorder. Pacthod's and Amey's tiny National Guard divisions, which were attempting to join the marshals there, were overwhelmed after an epic fight. The marshals withdrew through Provins to Paris. Rallying detachments and fugitives, Compans made a fighting withdrawal from Meaux.

At St. Dizier, Napoleon found Schwarzenberg's movements increasingly puzzling. On the 26th, he routed Winzingerode, who had probed south from Vitry, and learned that the Allies were marching on Paris. Here was the crisis. He could hardly outstrip the Allies' advance on Paris, but he now could maneuver freely in their rear. The Thionville, Metz, Verdun, and Strasbourg garrisons were ready to join him; local forces controlled much of the Argonne, Ardennes, and Vosges regions. Apparently, Napoleon still intended to move eastward, but his war-weary staff and corps commanders instinctively rebelled against the idea. Caulaincourt, radiating defeatism, had rejoined French headquarters. Early on 28 March, Napoleon therefore marched for Paris via Bar-sur-Aube, Troyes, and Fontainebleau. At Doulevant, an agent sent by Postmaster General Lavalette warned him that disloyal elements in Paris were plotting to betray that city to the Allies. At Troyes, on 30 March, Napoleon left Berthier to bring on the army, and dashed ahead with a

small group of officers. That night, at a relay point eleven miles south of Paris, he learned that the city was in Allied hands.

Joseph had done practically nothing to organize Paris for defense until 29 March. At about 0400 the next morning, the Allies had begun a piecemeal attack against the northern outskirts of the city. Shortly after noon – though he knew that Napoleon was coming and that the Allies had not gained a foot – Joseph sneaked away, leaving the defense without any semblance of central control. After determined fighting, Mortier and Marmont gave up Paris (at 0200 on 31 March), and retired southward. Talleyrand seized his opportunities – charming Alexander, inventing a rump government to declare Napoleon dethroned, and planning Napoleon's assassination.

Napoleon massed 60,00 troops at Fontainebleau. There were some 145,000 Allies in Paris, but their communications were extremely sketchy. Paris itself was ready to explode. At Blois, the transplanted Imperial government began functioning with surprising efficiency. Soldiers and regimental officers stood ready, but the marshals and senior generals wanted a quick peace. Ney, Lefebvre, Moncey, Oudinot, and Macdonald mutinied. Marmont betrayed his corps to the Allies. After a vain effort to abdicate in favor of his three-year-old son, Napoleon abdicated unconditionally on 6 April.

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UNIT LISTING

FRENCH

Corp I.D.	Troops	Artillery	Commander	Composition
NAP CORP	15,000	50	Napoleon	2 Inf, I Cav
I Corp	13,000	20	Maison	3 Inf, 1 Cav
II Corp	15,000	16	Victor	3 Inf
III Corp	6,000	24	Ney	3 Cav
V Corp	2,000	20	Sebastiani	1 Inf
VI Corp	11,000	20	Marmont	2 Inf, 2 Cav
VII Corp	5,000	30	Oudinot	2 Inf
XI Corp	16,000	18	Macdonald	3 Inf, 2 Cav
Paris Resv	13,000	18	Gerard	3 Inf
Cav Corp	7,000	6	Grouchy	2 Cav
Gde Corp (Old Guard)	12,000	15	Mortier	3 Inf

ALLIED

Corp I.D.	Troops	Artillery	Commander	Composition
P I Corp	14,000	28	Yorck	4 Inf, 1 Cav
P II Corp	11,000	23	Kleist	2 Inf, 1 Cav
P III Corp	20,000	40	Buelow	4 Inf, 1 Cav
P BLU Corp	6,000	12	Bluecher	1 Inf
P LNG Corp	6,000	12	Langeron	1 Inf, 2 Cav
P GDE Corp	16,000	32	Barclay	1 Inf, 2 Cav
A III Corp	15,000	30	Schwarzenburg	4 Inf
A IV Corp	11,000	22	Wuerttemburg	2 Inf, 2 Cav
A V Corp	21,000	42	Wrede	5 Inf, 2 Cav
R I Corp	5,000	10	Gortchakof	2 Inf
R II Corp	10,000	20	Eugen	2 Inf
R III Corp	10,000	20	Lambert	2 Inf
R V Corp	13,000	26	Yermolf	2 Inf
R VI Corp	5,000	10	Woronzow	2 Inf
R VI Corp	5,000	10	Scherbatow	2 Inf
R VII Corp	23,000	46	Winzingerode	5 Inf, 1 Cav
R IX Corp	2,000	4	Olsufief	1 Inf
R X Corp	5,000	10	Kaptzevitch	2 Inf
R XI Corp	12,000	24	Osten-Sacken	3 Inf, 2 Cav
R VI Cav	4,000	8	Wittgenstein	2 Cav

In the above chart, the bold letter preceding the Allied Corp I.D. Identifies that corps' nationality **P** = Prussian; **A** = Austrian; **R** = Russian.

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